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The poor law system of  
Elberfeld

London

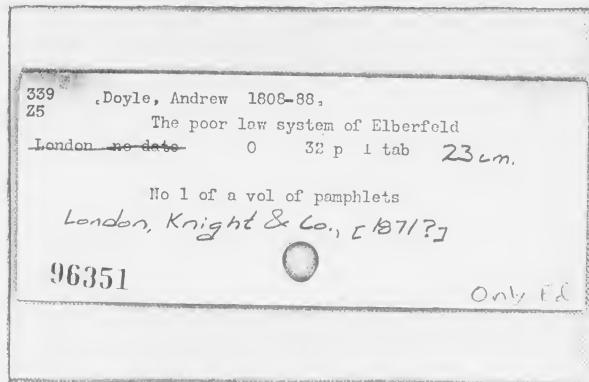
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THE  
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## THE POOR LAW SYSTEM OF ELBERFELD.

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TO THE RIGHT HON. JAMES STANSFIELD, M.P.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to inform you that, in compliance with your instructions, I have visited Elberfeld, and made inquiry into the system of Poor Law Relief that is in operation in that town. Having ascertained that the same system had been adopted in the towns of Barmen and Crefeld, it appeared to me to be important to extend the inquiry, not only to those towns, but also, for the purpose of comparison, to the towns of Düsseldorf and Aix-la-Chapelle, in which the Poor Law is still administered under the old system that formerly prevailed in Elberfeld. I was able to do this in the short time at my disposal by the aid that was most kindly and zealously given to me by Mr. Crowe, H.M. Consul-General in Saxony, who, under instructions from H.M. Chief Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was associated with me as a colleague in this inquiry. The Report which I have the honour to submit to you is, therefore, the result of an inquiry made by Mr. Crowe and myself.

The desirableness of instituting this inquiry was, I believe, in the first instance suggested to you by Mr. Rathbone, M.P. for Liverpool. While Mr. Crowe and I were at Elberfeld, Mr. Rathbone visited the town, and made inquiry himself into the system in which he takes so great an interest. How far Mr. Rathbone may concur

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in the view of the system presented in this Report, I am of course unable to say. But in considering the question whether it would be possible or expedient to engraft any part of the Elberfeld system upon our own, the opinion of one who has had so much practical experience, not of Poor Law administration only, but of the organised administration of private charity, cannot fail to be of great value; and I may be allowed, I hope, to express satisfaction that an opportunity may be afforded of comparing, by an independent authority of so much weight, the efficiency of two systems that are in many respects so greatly at variance as are those of Elberfeld and Liverpool.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
ANDREW DOYLE,  
*Poor Law Inspector.*

## R E P O R T.

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In the year 1852—the year before the present system of Poor Law Relief was adopted in Elberfeld—the total number of persons relieved out of a population of 50,364 was 4,000, or just 8 per cent., at a cost of 47,149 thalers, or 7,072*l.* 7*s.*

The present system was established in 1853–4.

In 1857 the population had increased from 50,364 to 52,590; the number of paupers had decreased from 4,000 to 1,528, or from 8 per cent. to 2·9 per cent. on the population; the expenditure from 47,149 thalers (7,072*l.* 7*s.*) to 17,487 (2,62*3s.*)

The history of the means by which this extraordinary change was effected is the history of what is known as “the Elberfeld system” of poor law relief; the origin, constitution, and general results of which I shall state as briefly as is consistent with the giving of a fair and sufficiently full account of it.

By a Royal Prussian Decree, dated May 21, 1823, applicable to the Province of Düsseldorf alone, the municipalities (*politische Gemeinde*) were constituted the legal authority for poor relief, and from that time forward the poor law in Elberfeld, Barmen, Düsseldorf, Remscheid, Solingen, and other places within the *Kreis* or circle of Düsseldorf, was administered by the municipalities. Down to 1850 the poor laws in operation within the district or circle were based upon the French legislation under the Empire in the Rhenish provinces. It was only in a certain number of the towns that, until a very recent period, local regulations for the relief of the poor superseded the *Bureaux de bienfaisance*. Elberfeld was one of the towns the municipality of which took advantage of the right to establish a local system of poor law administration.

In 1850 the town was divided into sixty districts, a visitor or *Armenpfleger* being appointed for each district. It is not necessary to enter into any details respecting this earlier organisation further than to observe that it proved to be unsuccessful. The number of visitors was found to

be too few; the duties of the visitor were neglected; the pauperism and expenditure increased; and the condition of the town with reference to its pauper population—their complete demoralisation—was a source of much uneasiness to the more respectable inhabitants. Before the establishment of the present system an attempt was made to cope with the difficulty through the agency of the religious bodies, each community being invited to take charge of its own members. This proposal was accepted by the Lutherans alone, reputed to be the least pauperised class of the community. As the relief of the poor of the whole town was paid out of a common fund, it will be easily understood that for this reason, if for no other, the plan was altogether unsuccessful.

The state of pauperism and the amount of expenditure were in 1852 found to be such as to excite very general apprehension, and it was determined by the municipality to effect a complete revision of the system then in operation. It is worth observing that in the early constitution of the new system, the Lutherans were excepted, being allowed to retain the administration which, as I have stated, they alone had adopted for their own community. Within two years, however, after the introduction of the new system, it was found that the pauperism of the Lutheran community, under its separate administration, exceeded the proportion of the rest of the town by about 30 per cent. The result was the abandonment of this exceptional administration, the experience of which, however, is of value as illustrating the effect of two different systems working side by side in the same community and under similar circumstances.

The existing "Elberfeld system" of poor relief originated with one of its most distinguished citizens, the banker Daniel Von der Heydt. Although the infirm state of this gentleman's health prevents him, unhappily, from longer taking an active interest in the municipal affairs of the town, he has succeeded, mainly by the influence of his high personal character, in so far recommending the system of poor law administration that it may be now considered as firmly established, men of all classes freely admitting its complete efficiency. Indeed a comparison of the pauperism and expenditure of the town before and after the introduction of the system will be found to exhibit results that it would be hard to match in the administrative history of any English union.

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The principles enunciated by Mr. Von der Heydt, and which he has unceasingly enforced in his annual addresses, are embodied in a general law ("Ordnung") and a code of rules ("Instruction"), the former drawn up by the present Ober Bürgermeister, Dr. Lisehke, a man of great energy and force of character, and the latter suggested by the experience of Mr. Von der Heydt himself.

The Poor Law administration which Mr. Von der Heydt originated is constituted under the provisions of an *Armen Ordnung*, or Poor Law, framed in July 1852 and revised in January 1861. Provision is made in the *Ordnung* for the constitution of the several administrative bodies. Their duties and relations to each other are determined, and their proceedings regulated by certain rules. Appended to the *Ordnung* is an "*Instruction*" which embodies the whole of the rules that regulate the administration of relief. The *Ordnung* and *Instruction* taken together are to the Elberfeld system what "the Consolidated Orders" are to English Poor Law. I shall state the effect first of the *Ordnung* and then of the *Instruction*, and in doing so, instead of following exactly the terms or the order of either I shall embody such portions of each as may appear to be immediately connected.

Under the provisions of the *Ordnung* the administration of the Poor Law devolves primarily upon the *Armenverwaltung* or town administration of the poor. This body consists of a President, four members of the Municipal Council, and four citizens, usually selected from the wealthy and more distinguished inhabitants. They are appointed by the Municipal Council for a period of three years, and retire by rotation. Two members, one being of the number appointed from the Municipal Council and one of the number appointed from amongst the general ratepayers, retire every first and second year, and two of each class every third year. This arrangement, while it secures the renewal of the whole body within each period of three years, secures permanently the services of a certain number who have had some considerable previous experience. The retiring members are eligible for re-election, and are in fact generally re-elected. The only other point in the arrangement of this rotation is that the retirement of the first year is by lot, of every subsequent year "according to age."

Subordinate to the *Armenverwaltung* are—

1. The visitors or *Armenpfleger*.
2. The overseers or *Armenvorsteher*.

The offices of *Armenpfleger* and *Armenvorsteher*—visitor and overseer—are unpaid and compulsory. The citizens of each district ascertain by inquiry amongst themselves who of their body are likely to make the most efficient visitors or overseers, and having ascertained, as a matter of courtesy, that they are not unwilling to serve, nominate them for appointment to the Municipal Council. These nominations are usually accepted as a matter of course by the Council, and in the same way sanctioned by the Ober Bürgermeister. These formalities of selection and appointment are found to have the effect of conferring considerable dignity upon the office, which is not lessened by the fact that the selections and appointments are made in the most liberal spirit, without reference to politics or religion, or to any consideration save fitness for the office. The "oath of office" is simply a *handschlag* or grasp of the hand, which is possibly found to be not less binding than the more solemn form of obligation so often exacted from English officials.

The administration of out-door relief is entrusted to eighteen overseers (*Bezirksvorsteher*), or in case of unavoidable absence, substitutes elected from amongst the visitors or *Armenpfleger*, and to two hundred and fifty-two (252) visitors (*Armenpfleger*). The overseers and visitors are elected for three years, substitutes for one. One third of the overseers and visitors retire every year and are eligible for re-election. Each visitor or *Armenpfleger* has under his charge a certain section of the town, and fourteen of these sections are under the general superintendence of one overseer or *Bezirksvorsteher*.

The visitors of each district meet at least once a fortnight, the meeting being presided over by the overseer of the section.

Every application for relief is made to the visitor of the section.

Upon receiving the application the visitor is bound to make minute personal inquiry into the circumstances of the case. It will be seen in a subsequent part of this report that the inquiry is of the most searching character. If he be satisfied that a claim to relief, under conditions to be noticed hereafter, is established, and the case be one of urgent necessity, he is authorised to give relief at once. The form and amount of this relief is so prescribed as to obviate, as far as possible, the chance of abuse or imposture.

Reports of relief that may have been given by the visitor, and all applications made to him for relief, are submitted for consideration at the fortnightly meeting. They are disposed of in accordance with certain rules, hereafter to be noticed. Each case is decided by a majority of votes, the President having a casting vote. The President may also object to any decision of the meeting, and carry it by appeal to the next higher tribunal.

The conditions upon which relief may be granted, and under which applications are determined, are laid down in an "*Instruction*" drawn up by the Town Administration. I shall hereafter refer to this "*Instruction*" more fully, and would merely observe of it here, that it defines with great precision the duties and the powers of the visitors. That portion of it which refers immediately to the giving of relief may be regarded as "The Prohibitory Order" of the Elberfeld system.

From this account of the mode in which the meetings of the visitors or *Armenpfleger* are regulated, it will be observed that there is no corresponding administrative body in our poor law system. The counterpart to it with us would be a meeting of fourteen relieving officers, unpaid, each with a district comprising not more than four cases, bound to administer relief in accordance with certain fixed and very stringent rules, each responsible to the majority of his fellows, and all responsible to the higher administrative tribunal, the town administration or *Verwaltung*. It may be further observed that these relieving officers should be selected from amongst well-to-do citizens, shopkeepers, manufacturers, master mechanics, and men engaged in various professions, and that they should be selected upon the simple ground of their fitness for the office.

An opportunity was obligingly afforded to Mr. Crowe and me of attending one of these meetings on the 18th of October. (With a view of avoiding expense, all these district meetings are held in the schoolroom of the district.) Of the fourteen *Armenpfleger* of the district, twelve were present, the meeting being presided over by Mr. Kost, the overseer of the district. Each *Armenpfleger* produced the sheet that is equivalent to our Application and Report Book (*Abhörbogen*), from which the particulars of the cases were read. There was no new case—no fresh application for consideration. Eighteen cases, however, were reheard or revised. One

was a case of non-resident relief, an aged widow resident in Elberfeld, but settled in Düsseldorf. The only peculiarity about the case was that the pauper received from Düsseldorf a larger amount of relief than she would have received had she been settled in Elberfeld; that is she received 32 instead of 25 silber groschen, 3s. 2½d. instead of 2s. 6d. Some of the applications showed that the visitor within whose district they were comprised had very minute knowledge of the circumstances of each case. In one case a visitor proposed that the relief of an aged widow should be reduced upon the ground that the doctor had certified that she was capable of getting more than the sum returned as "earnings." The visitor of the district thought there must be some mistake, he "knew that she could not get more." The medical certificate was examined and was found to be dated so far back as April. Temporary relief was sanctioned, and an order made that a fresh medical certificate should be obtained and produced at the next meeting. Another case was that of a widow with two children who was in receipt, as weekly relief, of 45 silbergroschen (or 5s. 6d.) It was reported that since the last meeting the two children had got employment, and were now able to earn 20 silber groschen per week. After some discussion it was resolved to reduce the relief by 5 silbergroschen, with an intimation that a further reduction would be made as soon as it was seen that the earnings of the children were a source of permanent income. Before the termination of the sitting, each visitor received from the overseer the amount in cash of the estimated expenditure of his district for the next fortnight. The source from which these moneys are provided I shall explain presently.

If it should be thought that the cases to which I have just referred are so trivial or common-place as to be hardly worth recording, I can but say that they fairly illustrate the every-day working of the system. They show minute knowledge of the circumstances of each case by the district visitor, and they show the consideration as well as the care with which these circumstances are weighed. The meeting, which was merely one of business, not enlivened by speeches, wrangling, or irrelevant talking, lasted just one hour and ten minutes, and would have terminated sooner, but for the courtesy that allowed us to make inquiry on any point on which we might take an interest. The secretary, always one of the visitors who

may be present, made minutes of the proceedings, and these, with the minutes of the several meetings of the other districts, all held upon the same day, would be presented for consideration and confirmation the following week at the fortnightly meeting of the *Verwaltung* or town administration of the poor.

The meetings of the town administration, like those of the visitors, are held fortnightly, but on the alternate Wednesday. These take place in the Town Hall, and in the absence of the President, Mr. Von der Heydt, are presided over by the Vice-President, Mr. Gustav Schlieper. The proceedings of these meetings, like those of the visitors, are conducted in accordance with prescribed forms.

They take into consideration the minutes of the district meetings which they may alter or annul.

The overseers attend these meetings, give information as to the state of the poor in their districts, and such further information as may be required of them; submit for consideration such decisions of the district meetings as they may object to or consider to be of doubtful legality; submit such questions as may have been reserved by the district meeting as not being within their jurisdiction; submit estimates of expenditure, including money, food, clothing, for the ensuing fortnight; receive from the town assembly the sums appropriated to each district, which they are bound to hand over to the visitor. The town assembly also receives and considers the reports of the several committees appointed to superintend the management of the town poor-house, the hospital, and the orphanage. These committees, or *Directione*, consist of one member of the municipal assembly, and two inhabitants in possession of the municipal franchise. They are elected for three years, one retiring each year by rotation. We were permitted to attend the meeting of this body on the 11th of October. The proceedings were merely routine, that is, the relief lists of the several districts were examined, not as a matter of form, but carefully, and were passed, and orders upon the town treasury for the next fortnight's expenditure were given to the several overseers. To a stranger the impression conveyed by the constitution of this body, and the demeanour of the members, would be what in England might be produced by attending a board meeting of the directors of some important public institution or large commercial enterprise.

The more general duties of the town assembly as prescribed by the regulations are "to investigate the condition of the poor, and the special causes of existing pauperism, " as well as the means not only of relieving but of preventing it." Special regulations prescribe the management of the financial affairs of the whole poor administration. "The Town Administration of the Poor" has charge of the receipts and expenditure, of which a very full account is published annually. Detailed arrangements, into which it is unnecessary to enter, are made for the control of the moneys that pass from the municipal treasury by orders of the town assembly to the overseers and visitors.

This is a brief, but I believe accurate outline of the provisions of the *Armen Ordnung*, or what may be termed the constitution of the poor law administration.

The rules for giving effect to the provisions of this law contained in the "*Instruction*" are full and minute, some of them, however, merely technical. As the success of the whole system depends upon the strict observance of some at least of these rules, I shall state them somewhat in detail. In doing this, however, it will be more convenient to embody the substance, and state the effect of several detached provisions that have relation to each other, rather than to state them fully in the order in which they are given in the "*Instruction*".

The first four articles of the "*Instruction*" contain what I presume may be described as "*the General Prohibitory Order*" of the Elberfeld law.

" 1. Every person who is destitute and unable to procure work shall, upon application by himself or by another on his behalf, be relieved from the town funds, except when other persons bound by law to relieve him possess the means of doing so, or except when he is in receipt of relief from private charity.

" 2. Any able-bodied person being destitute and unrelieved by private charity may, by applying personally or through friends for relief, and upon proof that he has tried unsuccessfully to obtain work, be entitled to receive temporary relief until such time as he can earn a sufficient livelihood, he being bound in the meantime to perform such work as may be assigned to him.

" 3. Single persons and heads of families whose income suffices to procure for themselves the absolute necessities (*das unabreislich Nothwendige*) of life are not to be considered as destitute, that is, entitled to relief from the public funds.

" The sum to be considered sufficient for procuring the absolute necessities of life in respect of food, clothing, lodging, furniture, and education is as a rule to be measured thus:—

- " 25 sgr. or 2s. 6d. for the head of a family.
- " 19 " or 1s. 11d. for his wife when living with her husband.
- " 17 " or 1s. 8½d. for a child of fifteen or upwards.
- " 15 " or 1s. 6d. for each child from 10 to 15 years.
- " 11 " or 1s. 1½d. for a child from 5 to 10.
- " 9 " or 10¾d. for each child from 1 to 5.
- " 6 " or 7½d. for a child under one year.
- " 3 th. 12 sgr. or 10s. 2½d. for a family with five children.

" 25 sgr. or 2s. 6d. for a single person.

" 4. Poor relief in case of persons earning less than the means of subsistence may be administered as outdoor relief by grants of money, soup, clothes, and bedding, indispensable articles of furniture, free school-ing, surgical, medical, and midwifery attendance; medicine, cost of funeral; or it may be administered indoor in the town poor-house."

These are the general rules within which the administration of relief is restricted.

It will here be convenient to connect with these rules such subsequent provisions of the "*Instruction*" as more immediately refer to them, and give such further explanations as they may seem to require.

The two exceptions to the first article are important. The Prussian law imposes the obligation of supporting relations in a much wider sense than does our statute of Elizabeth.

a. Parents, grand-parents, and great-grand-parents are bound, if capable, to support their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

b. A corresponding obligation is thrown upon children, grand-children, and great-grand-children.

c. Man and wife to support each other.

d. Children-in-law, with certain exceptions, to support their parents-in-law.

e. Parents-in-law, with similar exceptions, to support children-in-law.

Persons hiring domestic servants are bound to support them, or pay the cost of their relief, for four weeks after they become destitute through sickness; so also the obligation to support a destitute person may be incurred by contract, as in cases of benefit societies, burial societies, &c.

Nowhere is the legal obligation of supporting relations, especially the duty of children to contribute to the support of parents, more rigidly enforced than in Elberfeld. It is enjoined in the "*Instruction*" upon overseers and visitors to impress and enforce this duty upon all occasions. A person who is by law liable to contribute to the support of a relation and, being able, neglects, upon being called upon, to do so, was, if the relation became chargeable, liable by the police regulations to imprisonment during such time as the relief might be required.

The second exception must be taken with some qualification of the terms. Although the Elberfeld administration are desirous of keeping charity and poor law relief wholly distinct, and such is the object of this provision, yet it is found to be practically impossible to refuse altogether to relieve poor persons who are in receipt of charity. The utmost care, however, is taken to ascertain whether an applicant for relief is in receipt of charity, and if so, the source, and sum; and relief is granted only to such an amount as to bring the whole income, including the receipt from charity, up to the scale already given.

The system of medical relief for out-door poor is this: The town is divided into five districts; each district being in charge of a medical officer and of a subordinate of a lower *status* termed a "*Heil-diener*," the equivalent, I suppose, of the extinct "barber surgeon;" whose functions are only occasional, and confined to the performance of the simplest operations. The medical officer is bound to attend every pauper who applies to him for medical aid with an order from the *Armenpfleger*. This order is essentially the same as our own order for medical relief. The medical officer writes a prescription in every case, which is taken to the apothecary who for the current year has the contract to dispense medicine. In the course of the year 1869 the medical officers wrote for the whole town 2,882 prescriptions, which are produced as vouchers for payment, and attended as medical officers 51 cases of

midwifery. The salary of three of the medical officers is 250 thalers or 37l. 10s. per annum; of the other two, 200 thalers or 30l. The five *Heil-diener* receive 12 thalers or 1l. 16s. per annum each. The cost of medicines for the year was 1,400 thalers or 210l. The whole cost of out-door medical relief for the year 1869, therefore, was—

Salaries	-	1,210	thaler or £181
Medicine	-	1,410	" " 210
Total	-	2,610	" " £ 391

In-door relief, as understood in English Poor Law administration,—that is as a test of destitution,—forms no part of the Elberfeld system. The *Armen-haus* or poor-house has more the character of an almshouse than of an English workhouse. The *Kranken-haus* or hospital does not correspond to our union hospital; nor does the Orphanage (or *Waisen-haus*) to our district school.

The *Armen-haus*, a large building on the outskirts of the town, contains on an average about 180 inmates. These are old and infirm people who are without homes or families. Although the arrangements and general management of the *Armen-haus* contrast not very favourably with those of an average English workhouse, yet the inmates appear to be comfortable and contented. They live very much as people of their class live in their own homes—but little attention being paid to floor space or cubic space, and still less to ventilation; they are sufficiently well clad; the dietary is good; they enjoy more freedom in every sense than would be consistent with the discipline of a union workhouse. In short, an old Elberfeld pauper smoking his eternal pipe in the *Aufenthaltszimmer* or "day-room" of the *Armen-haus* may well feel that he has got a comfortable asylum for the close of his days. It does not always happen, however, that he does close his days within its walls. Those who are capable of doing any work go out and earn what they can. The wages are paid to the manager of the *Armen-haus*, and when the amount exceeds the cost of their maintenance they are allowed to retain the difference. Through this practice these poor people not unfrequently find permanent work sufficient to maintain them out of the house while owing to the great demand for labour in Elberfeld and the very limited supply as well as the character of this sort of labour wages can in no way be affected by it.

The cost of maintenance in the *Armen-haus* is 1 th. 5 sgr. (or 3s. 6d.) per week.

The establishment consists of—		£    s.    d.
Master,	400 th. per annum,	or 60 0 0
Surgeon,	50 th.	7 10 0
Clerk,	200 th.	30 0 0
Assistant,	125 th.	18 15 0
4 servants,	40th. each	36 0 0
Cook,	60 th.	9 0 0
Groom,	70 th.	10 10 0
Carpenter,	17 th. } Barber, 33 th.	7 10 0
2 nurses,	160 th.	24 10 0
General expenses, fire, &c.	1,000 th. }	150 0 0
Total expense of officers and main-		338 6 0
tenance, 2,252 th.		

The hospital or *Kranken-haus* is the general hospital for the town to which paupers are sent and paid for at the rate of 9 groschen (or 10 $\frac{2}{3}$ d.) per day. The total number of patients of all classes admitted to the hospital during the year 1869 was 1,611, of whom 456 were paupers; 207 admitted by order of the overseers, and 249 transferred on account of sickness from the poor-house and orphanage. All that seems necessary to say of this establishment is that it appeared to be well managed.

The orphanage or *Waisen-haus* is fairly well arranged and administered. All orphan and deserted children who become dependent are sent to it. The number in the house is about 260. The number of admissions to this establishment in the year 1867 was—orphans, 63, deserted, 51. The total number of children is large in proportion to the pauperism, and the number of deserted large in proportion to the orphans. I could not ascertain, however, that the care bestowed upon these children in bringing them up, educating them, and providing situations for them was considered to afford any inducement to desertion. In the instruction of the children, reading, writing, arithmetic, and singing are varied by industrial work.

It may be admitted that the arrangements and management of the Elberfeld orphanage are inferior to those of our own district schools; but on the other hand it may

be said of it, in the first place, that the cost of maintenance is only 70 thalers or 10*l.* 10*s.*, instead of from 18*l.* to 20*l.* per annum; and, secondly, that the children who are brought up in it turn out creditably as factory hands, shoemakers, tailors, domestic servants, &c. The work proposed may not be very ambitious, but it seems to be thoroughly done. Indeed the character of the people is in some sort reflected in this and similar institutions—plain and unpretending,—and, if somewhat rough, eminently practical, even in their teaching of singing,—for not otherwise than “practical” I suppose might be considered the zealous efforts it must have cost to teach the large class of infants to chant with so much spirit as they did upon the occasion of our visit the now national hymn of the *Wacht am Rhein*.

Into these establishments no person is admitted who would not be entitled to out-door relief. It will thus be seen that no stress is laid on these institutions as “tests,” or as means of checking pauperism. In fact, as I have already said, “the workhouse,” in our theoretical sense of the term, is no part of the Elberfeld system; so that with the account that I have just given of the Poor-house, the Hospital, and the Orphanage, I may dismiss the subject of in-door relief.

It was assumed by the framers of the English Poor Law, and is still assumed by those who continue to take any interest in administering it upon the principle upon which it was founded, that no real test of destitution can be devised except the test of the workhouse. As the application of that test is as yet no part of the Elberfeld system it will be asked—what is the substitute for it?

In the first place the applicant for relief is subjected to an examination so close and searching, so absolutely inquisitorial, that no man who could possibly escape from it would submit to it. He is not one of several hundreds who can tell his own story to an overworked relieving officer, but one of a very few, never exceeding four,—frequently the single applicant—who is bound by law to answer every one of that long string of questions that his interrogator is bound by law to put to him. One of the peculiar merits claimed, and I believe rightly claimed, for this system is that before a man can obtain relief it must be shown that he cannot exist without it. When an application is made for relief the applicant is in the first instance bound to state whether he has a settle-

ment in Elberfeld, that is, whether he has resided in it without receiving relief for a period of twelve months, how long he has resided in it, where he resided before, whether he reported himself to the police and obtained permission to reside, or whether he has resided without permission; he is bound to give, with his own name, the name of every member of his family, the day, month, and year of the birth of each, his religious profession, his birth-place, and how long his family resided there, the street or district in which he lives, the number of his house and the name of his landlord, the description of his dwelling and the yearly rent, the state of health of each member of his family, his occupation, the name of his employer, his average weekly earnings, proved, if possible, by a voucher; he must declare whether the family leads a moral and honest life, specify which of the members does not, whether or not the children are sent to school, and where; the name, dwelling, business, and circumstances of surviving parents, parents-in-law, and grand-parents, as well as of the children not living with the head of the family. In addition to this information, which the applicant is bound to give, the visitor is to ascertain, as far as he can, and report "the causes of the pauperism of the applicant." Be it observed that this is not a merely nominal or superficial inquiry in which the applicant has no difficulty in palming off some plausible story of distress and the cause of it, but is, what it professes to be, a strict investigation into the circumstances of the man's life and present position. When the case is satisfactorily proved to be one in which the applicant is entitled to relief he gets it to such an amount only as will furnish the bare necessities of existence for himself and his family; it is given to him from week to week in money or in kind as may be thought most advisable; if articles of furniture or clothing are given the visitor must satisfy himself from time to time that they are not pawned or sold. If a member of the family is buried at the public cost, and any of the family follow the hearse "in a coach" the fact is assumed as evidence of ability to repay, and one thaler (3s.) is exacted for the use of the hearse: "No carriage or carriages are to follow the poor-house hearse, as this would prove that the relations of the deceased were able to spend money, and prove that they had obtained the use of the hearse under false pretences." The applicant having established his claim,

and being allowed weekly relief, is constantly "looked up" by the visitor; every change, however minute, in his own condition or in that of his family is noted and reported,—the pauper is, in fact, kept under constant *surveillance*; he is urged to find work, and if he cannot find it, labour is provided for him. It rarely happens, however, that the town is compelled to find work for individual cases; the conditions of relief are found to be sufficiently stringent to induce a man, if he can work and if work is to be found, to find it for himself, if not in Elberfeld, elsewhere, for the circulation of labour is now sufficiently free, and the law of settlement sufficiently liberal. If, however, when this system was first introduced, the administration had to deal with, what in other countries is a too common case, one whose pauperism is the result of idle, drunken, or dissolute habits, no scruple or hesitation was felt in bringing to bear upon such a case the direct influence of a remarkably strict police regulation. It was declared by article 51, that "where a pauper wastes the money granted to him, or sells the clothing, bedding, or furniture granted to him, the relief may be entirely withdrawn or reduced to a minimum." By article 52, the following offences were punishable with imprisonment for seven days to one month:

1. "When a person so far abandons himself to play, drink, or idleness as to require relief either for himself or for those dependent upon him for support."
2. "When a person refuses to do the work assigned to him and suited to his strength."
3. "When a person, after losing the means of support that he possessed, fails to obtain a livelihood within a period to be limited by the police of the place in which he resides, or cannot prove that he is unable to obtain a livelihood after doing all in his power for the purpose."

[This provision of the police law has been within the last year repealed, much to the regret of those who are responsible for the administration of the Elberfeld system. It remains to be seen how far this relaxation of the police law will in the future affect injuriously the administration of the poor law.]

In the event of any large number of persons being out of work and requiring relief, some public work, generally the making or improving of a road, is at once undertaken.

(I may observe, incidentally, that in few towns in which I have ever set foot is there a wider field for such public works as drainage and sewerage.) The efficiency of this test is strongly dwelt upon by the Bürgermeister of the neighbouring town of Barmen, where the Elberfeld system, recently adopted, is now in operation.

The giving of relief is still further fenced round by minute regulations, such as the keeping of a wages book (*Verdienst buch*) by the pauper, the particulars of wages, &c. to be entered by the employer, all framed with a view to discourage applications save under circumstances of absolute necessity.

It was not to be expected that the lax system which had heretofore prevailed could be replaced by one, comparatively speaking, of extreme rigour without exciting a good deal of discontent. The change, though effected in a small community, was in principle as great as that which in England attended the passing of "the new Poor Law," and was followed by the same clamour of the pauperized masses, the same dissatisfaction amongst the philanthropic distributors of other people's money. Against this feeling Mr. Daniel Von der Heydt appears to have taken successive occasions to remonstrate in his annual address to the Poor Administration of the city. I offer no excuse for quoting somewhat fully from the characteristic address which he delivered in 1866-7. "Last year," he remarks, "we referred to the difficulties that beset us in the administration of this system; we observed how hard it was to refuse the pressing demands made for assistance out of the town funds in cases in which we knew that misery was great, yet the town was not bound to grant relief. We added, 'what we administer is not *our* thalers and groschen, but funds raised by the taxation of our fellow citizens, money meant to be expended under certain recognised conditions and in accordance with certain rules.' An insufficient scrutiny of an application for relief followed by an unjustifiable grant of relief is a great error; but so also is the granting of relief in cases where a sufficient scrutiny has satisfied us that the applicant is already in receipt of an income from private charity or from the funds of a religious endowment. Both of these are errors neither of which can be justified by the duties of our office nor be excused under the plea of 'love to our neighbours.' A

" form of this 'love' which should exhaust the town funds for the purpose of assisting persons not entitled to relief in accordance with the positive conditions imposed by our laws can have neither moral nor social value, and would simply represent our overstepping of the duties that we have promised to perform. It will be a useful and proper effort for us all to make, to accept without murmur the disagreeable position in which we must be often placed. One of the most difficult of the duties imposed upon us in administering a poor law is to distinguish correctly the circumstances which in particular cases involve the responsibility of giving or withholding state relief. I do not mean the difficulty of ascertaining correctly the income of an applicant or pauper from work or from other sources; the means of doing this are indicated clearly in the 'Instructions.' What I mean is that after it has been shown that the head of a family has according to the scale fixed in our instructions a sufficient income for their support, or after it has been proved that though the income is insufficient the applicant is sufficiently able-bodied to earn a livelihood if he exerts himself, the question not unfrequently arises, 'Is the town bound in such cases to give relief?' It is in the nature of an application for relief in such a case that it is often accompanied by indications of moral debasement or by sickness or bodily defects; but there are also examples of applications on the part of able-bodied persons with incomes in favour of members of their family who are infirm or otherwise not able-bodied, say of children of tender age or of school age. The father says he spends his day at work, will not the town take his wife, who is enfeebled, and their children, who are untaught, into the town establishments, the poorhouse, the hospital, or the orphanage? In such cases, I ask, is the Poor Administration legally bound to relieve? If not, then would it be justified in exceptionally sanctioning a system of relief to which it is not legally bound? My answer is, were we to sanction one or more of such cases we should be flooded with them. But it may be said by a district visitor, for instance, 'suppose we obey the instructions and refuse the application of the husband or parents, what say our feelings as men, what say our pity and our thoughts as to the future of these poor people?' The answer must be, 'Let the man who has sworn to carry out the regulations

" 'keep within the limits of his office. Let him remember that the town (*gemeinde*) has given him the charge of relieving the poor only in exchange for his assurance that he will strictly keep within those limits; that it has told him clearly what applicant, if he be in distress, he is to relieve, and how he shall relieve him.' Let us then remain modestly within the bounds of the duty prescribed for us by our superiors. Upon that field we shall find plenty of work to do, even though a section should for a time have no poor in receipt of relief."

The result of administration upon these principles is that there is no able-bodied pauperism in Elberfeld, and, as will appear presently, very little of any kind.

If it be thought that the conditions of obtaining relief are harsh and oppressively rigorous, it is but just to bear in mind not only the instructions that are given to the visitors, but how these instructions are practically observed. Repeatedly throughout the regulations are found injunctions to deal with the poor mercifully, and, if the provisions of the law be unavoidably hard, to administer it at least in a spirit of kindness and Christian forbearance. The visitor is enjoined to "hear the prayers of the poor with love and heart," to impress upon the father the duty that he owes to his child, and upon the child the reverence that is due to the parent; he is to be, in short, the friend and adviser of the poor who apply to him for legal relief. Although in the same breath, so to speak, in which good advice is tendered bread may be refused, nothing would be further from the truth than to regard this as any indication of a merely sentimental, still less of a pharisaical, interest in the welfare of the poor. It would be easy to illustrate by many cases that were mentioned to us the beneficial effect upon individual families of firmness in refusing to allow them to become paupers while they were helped over temporary difficulties by some slight aid and judicious friendly counsel. Indeed, I have heard men who appear to have given much thought to the subject observe that the influence of this sort of intimate intercourse between the poor and those in a much higher social position reaches far beyond the temporary result that is immediately aimed at.

Without pretending to say how far such a mode of administering not charity but poor relief would be consistent with the freedom of English domestic life or would be tolerated by a people so jealous of personal and family

independence, I am satisfied, from what I have seen and ascertained by inquiry, that in Elberfeld and the few other towns that have adopted it, this part of the system works with complete success. Possibly, however, in England it might be less difficult to reconcile the poor to such a system than it would be to find amongst the well-to-do middle classes fit and willing agents for its administration.

Having only incidentally referred to the results of this system as shown by the great reduction effected by it in the pauperism and expenditure of the town, I may now state more precisely the actual income devoted to poor relief, the sources whence it is derived, and the comparative expenditure and pauperism for a given number of years.

The revenue appropriated to the relief of the poor is derived partly from taxes devoted to that special object and partly from the general municipal taxation. The former is derived from interest on moneys invested, from reserve fund of Savings Bank, from the profits of the *Täglicher Anzeiger* newspaper, from police fines, license of theatres, concerts, &c., repayments from patients in hospital, and some other sources, amounting in all to 39,345 thalers or 5,901*l.*, to which is added 49,498 thalers or 7,424*l.* from the municipal funds, which latter sum, by the way, includes five thalers, the tax on the one caged nightingale that appears to be kept in Elberfeld.

The expenditure for the two years preceding the adoption of the present system was:—

	Population.	Expenditure.
1851 -	49,058	43,879 Th. or £6,581 17s.
1852 -	50,364	59,548 Th. or £8,932 4s.

The immediate effect of the adoption of the present system was in 1853, with a slight increase of population, a decrease of, upon the expenditure of the preceding year, 29,521 thalers or 49·5 per cent. The comparative expenditure for the last four years, with a considerably increased population, was:—

	Population.	Thalers.	£
1852 -	50,364	59,548	or 8,932
[The year before the system was adopted.]			
1866 -	64,963	24,842	3,726
1867 -	65,321	27,182	4,077
1868 -	67,000	25,559	3,833
1869 -	71,000	25,739	3,850

that is, the expenditure of 1869 was 56·7 per cent. less than the expenditure of 1852, the year preceding that in which the system was adopted, while the population of 1869 exceeded that of 1852 by 40·9 per cent. It should be observed, however, that the expenditure of 1852 was exceptionally high. It had increased from 32,286 thalers or 4,842*l.* in 1850 to 43,879 thalers or 6,581*l.* in 1851, and to 59,548 thalers or 8,932*l.* in 1852. It should also be observed that the year 1852 in which the pauperism was exceptionally high was a year of great plenty in which labour was not affected by any disturbing cause. To the uneasiness created by this rapid increase of expenditure, accompanied by a corresponding increase in pauperism, may be ascribed the adoption of the present system and the energy with which it was administered.

The comparison of Pauperism is not less remarkable than that of Expenditure. The Reports of Mr. Von der Heydt for 1867 and of Dr. Lischke for 1868, 1869, and 1870 contain tables of the pauperism for several years, from which it would appear that the average number relieved was in—

	Population.	No. of Paupers.
1852	-	50,364
1853*	-	50,418
1866	-	64,963
1867	-	65,321
1868	-	67,000
1869	-	71,000

\* The first year under the present system.

The general opinion of those persons whom we had an opportunity of consulting is that the system of Poor Law Administration has had a marked effect upon the habits of the people—inducing much greater thrift and providence. This seems to be confirmed by such returns of Benefit Societies as we had access to. The number of contributors appears to increase steadily from year to year. It was in—

1867	-	-	5,175
1868	-	-	5,790
1869	-	-	6,251

The constitution of these societies—the *Zwang Kassen*, or compulsory clubs, to which employers as well as operatives are bound to contribute in certain proportions, and the *Frei Kassen*, or free clubs, to which the work-people alone contribute—is well deserving of sepa-

rate and full examination. I only advert to the return here as an indication not to be lost sight of in appreciating the general results of the Elberfeld system.

There are persons in Elberfeld and elsewhere who appear to think that as this system could never have been successfully introduced except by the personal influence of Mr. Von der Heydt, so, if that influence were unhappily withdrawn, the administration of the Poor Law would by degrees relapse into its former unsatisfactory state. One can easily believe that but for the courage and energy of Mr. Von der Heydt and the great weight attached by his fellow citizens to his opinion, the system might hardly have had a fair chance. As it was, even Mr. Von der Heydt's character did not save the proposal, when first made, from being publicly characterised as "utopian" and "impracticable," or from being exposed not only to open hostility but to that sort of hesitating support that is often a greater obstacle than open hostility to the success of any scheme that involves radical change. The success of the system, however, no longer depends upon the influence of any individual. It is in successful operation in Barmen and Crefeld. In neither of these towns could there be said to have been any one person the counterpart of Mr. Von der Heydt. But amongst the wealthiest and most distinguished citizens of both there were found men of sufficient energy and self-devotion to take up the work and carry it through in the face of difficulties even more formidable than it had to encounter in Elberfeld. There would be little danger I apprehend that the offices now filled in Crefeld by such men as Mr. Seyffardt and by Alexander Heimendahl would not hereafter be accepted by others of the same social position and the duties discharged with the same good-will, though never with greater energy, or with a more just appreciation of the system to which these good citizens have already given such valuable aid.

The success of the system in Elberfeld led to its adoption in 1863 in the neighbouring town of Barmen. In 1862 with a population of 53,831 the number of "cases" in receipt of relief in Barmen was 914, of persons 3,259. Although the year 1863, being a year of great depression in the trade of Barmen, was unfavourable for the application of the new system, yet the pauperism was through its operation reduced from 914 cases to an average of 678, and the individuals from 3,259 to an

average of 1,915. The average number of "cases" relieved in 1870, with a population of 71,000, was 693, of individuals 1,893. The expenditure for out-door relief in Barmen was—

In - - - -	1862	50,236	thalers.
It was reduced in - - -	1863	to 42,300	"
The in-door relief was in - -	1862	23,688	"
Which was reduced in - -	1863	to 21,600	"
The cost of management was in 1862		6,838	"
Which was reduced in - -	1863	to 4,073	"

If the results of the system in Barmen have not been altogether so striking as in Elberfeld, this may perhaps be accounted for by certain differences in the administration, as well as in the previous history of the place. The greatest importance is attached in Elberfeld to restricting the number of cases of which a visitor may take charge to four. The limitation in Barmen is six. The old system in Barmen was that each religious community took charge of its own poor, and this distinction is still observed in the establishments for in-door relief. It may be easily supposed that under such a system habits would have taken root not easy to extirpate however unfavourable they might be to the administration of state relief upon strict principles. Still the complete success of the system in Barmen is undoubtedly.

It should be noticed both in Elberfeld and Barmen that the cost *per head* of each pauper is considerably higher than it was under the old system. So in England the cost per head in a well managed Union is invariably much higher than in Unions that are greatly pauperised. The deserving poor only are relieved, but they are relieved liberally. In the least pauperised Union in the district under my supervision the cost per head of out-door paupers is 4*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*; the pauperism in that Union is only 2·2 per cent. In an adjoining Union in which the pauperism is 6·1 per cent. the cost per head of out-door paupers is 3*l.* 1*s.* 10*½d.*

The per-cent-age of pauperism in Crefeld before the present system was introduced cannot be ascertained with any degree of accuracy. Indeed, the administration of relief was so unsystematic that no records are to be had from which a trustworthy statistical comparison can be instituted between the actual results of the two systems. It is unquestionable, however, that under the old system mendicity had grown to be an intolerable public nuisance.

Street-begging is unknown in the town now. Formerly the distribution of relief gave rise constantly to scandalous disorders that sometimes necessitated the interference of the police. Instead of two or three hundred people collecting and scrambling, as I believe used to be the case, for the bread to which few of them had any real claim, the relief is now regularly paid personally by the *Armen-pfleger*, and only to those whose cases have been already carefully scrutinized.

Substantially the system adopted at Crefeld is the same as at Elberfeld. Some differences, however, may be noticed. The most important is that while at Elberfeld the scale of earnings above which no relief is granted is fixed at 25 Silbergroschen, or 2*s.* 6*d.*, for a single man, and 3 thalers 12 Groschen, or 10*s.* 2*½d.*, for a family consisting of man, wife, and five children, at Crefeld the corresponding sums are 17*½* sr. gr., or 1*s.* 9*d.*, 2 thalers, or 6*s.* This scale is fixed upon the calculation that a single man (able-bodied) must pay 7*½* sr. gr., or 9*d.*, per week for his lodging, and 10 sr. gr., or 1*s.*, for his maintenance, and that for a family of five the rent will be 10 sr. gr., or 1*s.*, and the maintenance 10 sr. gr., or 1*s.*, each for man and wife, and 6 sr. gr., or 7*½d.*, for each child. If a man or family earn, or it is proved that they can earn, this amount, no relief is granted. To this severe rule there are, however, exceptions in favour of aged and infirm people, to whose relief some addition *in kind* may be made, and in favour of the children of paupers, to whom clothing to enable them to go to school and school-books, &c. may be supplied and school fees paid. Provision is also made for the payment of the communal taxes for the pauper, and also for the Imperial capitation tax.

On the 1st of January 1870 the number of persons in receipt of relief in Crefeld was 1,206, or 509 cases. This upon a population of 55,539 would be 2·17 per cent. This is somewhat higher than the pauperism of Elberfeld, but the system was not introduced into Crefeld until 1864, that is not until eleven years after it had been in successful operation in Elberfeld.

Such being the effects of the Elberfeld system in the three towns in which it has been adopted, it will be of interest to contrast with them the state of pauperism and expenditure in two towns which still adhere to the old system that Elberfeld rejected some eighteen years ago.

No more striking illustration of the success of "the Elberfeld system" can be given than the contrast pre-

sented by the two neighbouring towns of Düsseldorf and Aix-la-Chapelle.

When in 1850 the administration of the Poor Law was entrusted to the municipalities, the town of Düsseldorf was divided into thirty (30) districts. The control of the administration of relief was entrusted to a body elected from the Municipal Council, consisting of a President and six members. Each district was placed under the supervision of a *Pfleger*, unpaid as in Elberfeld, to whom was entrusted the general control of out-door relief. Within the following year the number of districts and *Pfleger* was increased to 44, at which it still remains.

Applications for relief are made direct to the *Pfleger*, who inquires into the cases through the agency of persons selected by himself, called *Armen-Freunde*, and who generally comprise the clergymen of the religious denomination to which the applicant for relief belongs. Upon their report relief is usually granted, though not in accordance with prescribed rules such as restrict the authority of the *Armenpfleger* under the Elberfeld system.

Once in every month the *Pfleger* of the several districts appear before the town administration and report their proceedings during the preceding month. The relief which has been given in "cash, bread, coals, payment of rent, clothes, bedding, or furniture" is either confirmed or disallowed; almost always, however, confirmed.

As might be expected, the effect of such a system is an amount of pauperism exceeding that of Elberfeld by more than a hundred per cent. In the year 1868 the average number of persons relieved was 3,077, or about 797 families, out of a population of 62,700, while in the same year the number relieved in Elberfeld out of a population of 67,000 was 1,408.

It is scarcely possible to institute a comparison between the administration of Aix-la-Chapelle and of any of the other places referred to in this Report. With the exception of one section of the town, or rather of the inhabitants (the *Evangelicals*), the administration is by a law (*Armenordnung*) of 1822 in the hands of a Commission, under whose authority the town is divided into eight *Pfarrei* or parishes. Each *Pfarrei* is directly under the management of five *Pfleger*, who receive applications for relief and cause inquiry to be made into them by *Armenpfleger*, who are usually members of the society of St. Vincent de Paul. No *Armenpfleger* has under his care less than 15 or more than 30 cases or families. The reports of the *Armen-*

*pfleger* are brought before the monthly meetings of the District *Verein*, who decide upon the several cases.

We were unable to obtain any statistical account of the pauperism of this town. The Ober Bürgermeister stated that he believed there were about 1,600 cases or *Positionen* in receipt of relief, and that the expenditure was about 116,000 thalers, of which 56,000 is derived from interest of charitable bequests and 60,000 contributed from the municipal funds. Assuming these statements to be accurate, the pauperism and expenditure of Aix-la-Chapelle would appear to be about four times as great as those of Elberfeld. The population of the two towns is, as nearly as may be, the same, some 70,000.

It only remains to add, with reference to these two towns, that the Ober Bürgermeister of each expressed strongly his opinion that the state of pauperism was such as would compel the municipalities within a short time to adopt the Elberfeld system. That some change of the kind must be effected in the present anomalous system, not in these towns only, but eventually throughout the German Empire, hardly admits of doubt. Within the last few years all restrictions upon the circulation of labour have been removed; while a still more liberal reform has been effected in the law of settlement. By a change made within the last year, Prussia has effected a most important improvement in the law of settlement, one more advantageous to the mass of the people than has even yet been effected in England. An industrial residence "without relief" of one year now confers, not merely the status of irremovability, but a settlement in the place of residence. One effect of this change will obviously be that, if only as a matter of self-protection, the municipalities throughout the country will be compelled to adopt a much stricter system of Poor Law administration. As it is, we were assured that many of the poor of Elberfeld and Crefeld find their way to towns like Düsseldorf in which the system of relief is so attractively lenient.

When this change in the law of settlement is considered in connection with the law of November 1867, to which I have just referred, which removes all artificial restrictions upon the circulation of labour, it appears evident that the adoption of an improved and uniform system of Poor Law administration, throughout North Germany at least, can be only a question of a few years.

Although my instructions from your Board are simply "to inquire into the system of relief that is in operation in Elberfeld," I would ask permission to notice briefly some of the more striking points of contrast between that system and our own.

The administrative body in England is the Board of Guardians, assisted by relieving officers; in Elberfeld it is the overseers assisted by the visitors. The duties that in England are discharged by the guardians and relieving officers in Elberfeld devolve upon the overseers, "the visitors" or *Armenpfleger* discharging the duties of relieving officers. In addition to this there is the important provision that the proceedings of the *Armenpfleger* and visitors are revised fortnightly by the *Armen-Verwaltung* or higher Poor Law tribunal. Theoretically at least this system of checks appears to be admirably devised, and is said to work perfectly.

From the nature of the duties that devolve upon the visitor or *Armenpfleger*, as already described, his office is obviously the most important connected with the administration of the Poor Law, as in our system is, or ought to be, that of the relieving officer. Between the duties of these officers, as practically administered, it is difficult to imagine a greater contrast. The framers of the English Poor Law of 1834 started with a theory of administration not unlike that of the Elberfeld system. Every application for relief was to be rigidly inquired into. All the circumstances of the family, the number of children, occupation, earnings, resources of every description, with other facts more or less relevant, were to be ascertained and communicated to the Board of Guardians for their information and guidance. It was further contemplated by the framers of the English Poor Law that the relief was to be delivered, as a general rule, at their own homes to the paupers by the relieving officers. It is assumed in the English system that all this can be efficiently done by paid officers, many of whom, are no doubt zealous, intelligent, and fairly remunerated, but very many of whom, accepting these offices at salaries less than the wages of a skilled mechanic, have barely the qualifications of knowing how to read and write and keep the simplest form of accounts. It is further assumed in the English system that the relieving officer can efficiently discharge the important and multifarious duties of personally visiting and inquiring into and reporting upon all the cir-

cumstances and distributing the relief of, let us say, from 400 to 1,000 paupers, the numbers varying according to pauperism of districts of very unequal population. The last Annual Report of the Poor Law Board contains numberless illustrations of this statement. Thus, opening it at hazard, I find that in the Hoo Union "there is one relieving officer attending on an average to 112 paupers, of whom upwards of 50 are children." In the next Union, Medway, on the same page of the same Report, it appears "there is one relieving officer who attends on an average to 1,313 paupers, of whom 606 are children." Assuming that each family of paupers in the Medway Union consists of four persons, the number of "cases" that a relieving officer would have in charge would be 328. In the table annexed to Mr. Henley's Report it appears that the population of the relieving officers districts varies from 5,645, the lowest, to 50,261, the highest. Assuming the pauperism of these unions to be 4 per cent., and that each family consists of four persons, the relieving officer in the one case would have to attend to about 224 persons or 56 cases, in the other to about 2,000 paupers or 500 cases, and so on through the whole kingdom.

When the Elberfeld system was first established in 1853, the number of visitors or, as we should say, relieving officers, was sixty, to a population of about 50,000. It was found, however, to be impracticable for even this large number of officers to personally make the strict inquiries and frequent visits that are required by the regulations already described. The number of visitors was therefore at once increased from sixty to two hundred and fifty-two, and no visitor is allowed to have in charge more than four cases, or, as they are termed, *Positionen*. When the number of visitors was fewer, the duties of visiting, inquiring, and relieving were not always discharged personally. By men occupied in business the duties were found to be too onerous. The office of *Armenpfleger* was accepted with reluctance, the cases were either left unvisited or were visited by deputy. Indeed one half of the number of offices were practically unfilled, and there was but little personal intercourse between the administrators and the poor. But the men with whom the system originated, and the men who now carry it out in the spirit in which it originated, attribute the whole success of the system to the strict *personal* discharge of duty. "Everything can be done by personal intercourse with the poor, nothing

" without it," was the remark of the Ober Bürgermeister in discussing the practicability of introducing some such system into large towns in England. The mode of appointment and the duties of the *Armenpfleger* I have already stated. His qualifications are thus indicated in "the instruction" issued to the overseers (Art. 6). " The offices of overseer and visitor are the most important " of civic honorary offices, requiring in the persons who " accept them a large measure of human kindness " and an earnest sense of duty,—kindness to hear the " prayers of the poor with love and heart, duty to " withstand demands urged upon insufficient grounds, " so that idleness and immorality may not follow " from indiscriminate almsgiving." Again in article 18 of the same instruction it is laid down to be the duty of the visitor (*Armenpfleger*) " to visit the poor of his section frequently—not less than once in every fortnight; " to note in the *Ablörgogen* (application and report book) " any changes that may have taken place in the condition " of the family, in their income, number, &c.; to satisfy " himself that such articles of clothing, furniture, &c. as " may have been given or lent are in the possession of " the pauper; to reprimand disorderly conduct and im- " morality; to enforce order, cleanliness, and honesty; " to warn parents of their duties to their children, especially as regards education and their attendance at " school; to impress upon children that they are to be " reverent towards their parents, and to contribute to " their support. In short, he must strive to exercise a " healthy influence over the moral feelings of the poor." Strangely will such "regulations" as these sound to the ears of English Poor Law administrators; yet in such regulations do the municipality and citizens of Elberfeld believe that they have found the solution of a social problem of great difficulty. The principle of their Poor Law is strict almost to harshness; the administration of it is tempered by a spirit of benevolence that seems to elevate the system from being merely an instrument of severe repression into an effective means of prevention.

Although this constant personal intercourse between visitors and the poor is the essential characteristic of the Elberfeld system, and that in which it contrasts most strongly with our own, yet hardly less important are some other regulations of the "*Instruction*."

## SYNOPSIS of the FLUCTUATIONS in PAUPERISM during One Year in ELBERFELD.

		Paupers.												
		Remaining.												
1870.			650											
January	2	-	-	44										
"	15	Discharged	-	98	51									
"	29	Remaining	-	19	25	Admitted.								
February	12	Discharged	-	587	86	58	Admitted.							
"	26	Remaining	-	570	22	20	60	Admitted.						
March	11	Discharged	-	559	19	10	20	48	Admitted.					
"	25	Remaining	-	546	17	15	27	24	46	Admitted.				
April	8	Discharged	-	535	9	1	21	18	24	37	Admitted.			
"	22	Remaining	-	526	14	12	19	17	14	11	39	Admitted.		
May	5	Discharged	-	510	12	10	18	17	9	5	1	39	Admitted.	
"	20	Remaining	-	490	9	8	14	16	9	9	2	19	Admitted.	
June	3	Discharged	-	488	9	7	13	15	8	9	8	10	26	Admitted.
"	17	Remaining	-	463	8	5	13	14	8	9	6	8	6	41 Admitted.
July	1	Discharged	-	438	8	5	13	13	6	8	6	6	3	33 Admitted.
"	15	Remaining	-	427	8	3	13	11	5	7	6	3	2	32 Admitted.
"	29	Discharged	-	423	8	3	12	10	5	6	6	2	2	15 Admitted.
August	12	Remaining	-	406	8	3	12	10	5	6	6	2	2	6 Admitted.
"	26	Discharged	-	387	8	3	12	10	4	6	6	2	2	13 Admitted.
September	9	Remaining	-	379	8	3	12	10	4	6	6	2	2	36 Admitted.
"	23	Discharged	-	372	8	3	12	10	4	6	5	2	1	21 Admitted.
October	7	Remaining	-	365	8	3	12	10	4	6	5	2	1	12 Admitted.
"	21	Discharged	-	360	8	3	11	10	4	6	5	2	1	18 Admitted.
November	4	Remaining	-	348	8	2	11	10	4	6	5	2	1	24 Admitted.
"	18	Discharged	-	342	8	2	10	9	3	6	5	2	1	25 Admitted.
December	2	Remaining	-	334	8	2	10	8	3	5	4	2	1	22 Admitted.
"	16	Discharged	-	325	8	2	10	8	3	5	4	2	1	11 Admitted.
Remaining at the end of the Year	-	-	-	323	8	2	10	8	3	5	4	2	1	31 Admitted.
				<b>323</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>TOTAL 510</b>
Single Cases	-	-	-	151	2	1	7	5	2	4	3	2	2	223
Heads of Families and their Dependents	-	-	-	153	6	—	1	2	1	1	—	1	2	259
Orphans & deserted Children	-	-	-	367	18	—	1	3	3	5	6	3	15	690
TOTAL of Persons Relieved				<b>691</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15205</b>

[From the following Table it will be seen that in the 26 sittings there were 822 new cases. Of these, 52, taking round numbers, in each hundred were discharged in the next following fortnight, and 9 in the second next following fortnight. Thus, in one month after the admission of the cases 60 out of every hundred were discharged.]

Relief is never granted for longer periods than fortnightly. Under our system a large per-cent-age of pauperism is "permanent," irregularly visited at long intervals, and only as a matter of form. It would, however, be unjust to ascribe this, the great blot in our system of administration, as a fault to the inefficiency of relieving officers. Looking to the tasks imposed upon them by the short-sighted parsimony of guardians, it is simply impossible for them to discharge efficiently what is perhaps the most important of their duties. The effect of constant revision and inquiry into cases is most forcibly illustrated in the table on the opposite page, which exhibits the fluctuation of pauperism in Elberfeld for the year 1870. From this statement it will be seen that in the 26 fortnightly sittings there were 822 new cases. Of these 52, taking round numbers, in each hundred were discharged in the next following fortnight, and 9 in the second next following fortnight. Thus in one month after the admission of the cases 60 out of every hundred were discharged. They had during that period been the subject of constant and careful inquiry, each case being re-visited "not less than once a fortnight," every change in the circumstances of the families being noted and reported within every fortnight.

Relief is as much as possible given in kind, so as to meet the special wants of cases as ascertained by inquiry.

Instead of the demoralising system of distributing relief at "pay-stations" to the agents of paupers (who frequently deduct a small per-cent-age on the amounts) or to children who may here receive the first taint of pauperism, the relief is delivered generally at the home of the pauper as it was originally contemplated should be done under our administration.

In conclusion, I may observe that although the "workhouse test" is no part of the Elberfeld system, yet some of the most experienced administrators of Poor Law in Crefeld as well as in Elberfeld look upon this as a serious defect, and one that in course of time must be remedied. Their view of a workhouse, however, is that as a means of testing destitution it should be used not until all other means have failed, and should be used only in cases that would justify the application of such discipline as would make it effective. They would regard as worse than useless a "workhouse" in which the condition of an inmate, whose pauperism was the result of idleness and

vice, was better than that of hundreds of ratepayers who are compelled to contribute to his support.

For the facilities and assistance afforded to us in this inquiry Mr. Crowe and I have to express our acknowledgments to Dr. Lischke, the Ober Bürgermeister of Elberfeld, to Mr. Schlieper, the Secretary Mr. Schwanenberg, to Mr. Alexander Heimendahl, and Mr. Seyffardt, of Crefeld, and to the Ober Bürgermeister of Düsseldorf and Aix-la-Chapelle.

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